

nurse to rouse him, should his mind begin
to wander;
but no unworthy delirium fell in parting
from the tongue
that through life had been so perfect in its
utterance.

Ronsard, like Montaigne, remains typical
of those rare
ages of transition when literatures flower—
those ages
when a nation, in the words of Taine, is 'en
train de
quitter le gout du grand pour le gout de
Tagreable—entre
les moeurs heroiques et les moeurs
picuriennes'—between
Bayard and Catherine de Medicis. Bred by
and for a
soldier; a skilled rider, fencer, and dancer in
his youth;
churchman, scholar, controversialist, and
poet; the orna-
ment of Courts and lover of the wild, he
reflected the
eagerness for life of that versatile and vital
age. It is an
easy mistake to picture him as a pale and
wan lover of
ladies and of letters, delicately decadent.
But if we think
so, that is at least not his fault.

Je ne suis pas paresseux, et ne Tay point
estf:

Tousjours la harquebuze, ou la paume
champestre,

Ou rescrime qui rend une jeimesse adextre,
Me retient en travail tout le jour arrest⁶.

In a debate before Henri III he upholds,
in tones that
might well be Montaigne's, the moral
against the in-
tellectual virtues—'On ne laisse pas d'estre
homme d'hon-
neur et vertu . . . sans sfavoir telles
curieuses vanitez.,
dont Teffect n'est que vent. Voyez-vous pas
nos labour-
eurs, quin'ont jamais appris que Tart de la
charue? Toutefois
ils vivent en gens de bien et d'honneur.'

Agrippa d'Aubign⁶ describes him as *a

gentleman of
courage, whom poetry had not deprived of
the use of his
sword*. Though as passionately learned as
poet has ever
been, he knew when to pitch his books
out of the
window.

J'ay Tesprit tout ennuyé
D'avoir trop étudié